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CABOT ESTATE

OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE

REPORT

September 23, 1971

Jamaica Plain
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1971

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REPORT

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1970, the Boston Redevelopment Authority was asked to consider a 2000 unit, high rise development scheme for a 22.8 acre site known as the "Cabot Estate" in Jamaica Plain.

Because of the unique character of this site, such a major housing plan held serious implications for the Jamaica Plain community, the City, and the entire metropolitan area. The Cabot Estate is located adjacent to Jamaica Pond -- part of Boston's famed "Emerald Necklace" -- on a site itself unique in ecological and architectural assets. The situation thus called for a planning effort of serious proportion.

In late 1970, Mayor Kevin White requested the creation of a Citizen's Advisory Committee to work with the City's planning staff in considering alternate development proposals. "While the committee will not infringe on the rights of the owner" the Mayor said, "it will assure that the proposed development takes community interests into account."

A preliminary organizational meeting was called by the Jamaica Plain Little City Hall on January 4, 1971. Subsequent meetings of the committee were open to the community at large and given extensive coverage in the local newspapers. By the time this Task Force visited Jamaica Plain in June, 1971, over 200 people had become involved from both Boston and the neighboring Town of Brookline.

In the months following the Mayor's initial action, the Boston Redevelopment Authority along with the Office of Public Service and

the Cabot Estate Advisory Committee studied a series of residential development plans within the context of the neighborhood's as well as the City's open space and residential needs and priorities. These studies incorporated a wide range of density, height, and massing variations as well as the open space needs and priorities as defined by the Advisory Committee. While the Advisory Committee, with BRA assistance, made a thorough evaluation of all residential alternatives, its final recommendations favored total conservation and rejected a development solution. A low-rise, low density, properly located, cluster condominium plan was deemed "acceptable" but only in the event that total conservation proved infeasible. These conclusions were presented to Mayor White on May 6, 1971.

In its report the Advisory Committee requested that a high level task force be appointed to explore more extensively the possible full or partial conservation uses of the site. The Advisory Committee requested that seven specific individuals be named to the task force. In addition, the Selectmen of the Town of Brookline requested the opportunity to participate.

On May 13, Mayor White announced the creation of the Cabot Estate Open Space Task Force. He named all seven members requested by the Advisory Committee, and he notified Brookline that the town would be given an opportunity to actively participate in all meetings as an observer. In naming the Task Force, the Mayor said, "I am very

concerned that this valuable land be used in the best interest of the City. Several months ago, I asked the citizens advisory group to work with the City to study development proposals for the site. We must now more clearly define what can be preserved."

Mayor White directed the Task Force to answer three basic questions:

- What would be the impact of various residential development alternatives on the open space character of the site and on the Jamaica Pond sector?
- What areas of the Cabot Estate should be acquired in the Jamaica Pond area?
- How can the city best pursue its open space objectives in the Jamaica Pond area?

To respond to these questions, the Task Force has considered a broad range of studies and investigations. Members of the Task Force have visited the site and the surrounding Jamaica Pond sector. They have heard the views of Jamaica Plain and Brookline residents, and have sought the counsel of experts in the fields of planning, conservation, architecture, and recreation.

The Task Force Report is divided into four sections:

The Summary and Recommendations section outlines the Task Force recommendations and the conclusions upon which they are based.

The Challenge describes the significant economic, topographical, ecological and architectural features of the Cabot Estate as well as the pertinent residential and open space characteristics of the surrounding Jamaica Pond sector.

In the Objectives section the Task Force analyzes open space and residential goals from two levels -- that of the City and that of the Jamaica Plain community.

The Alternatives - Analysis and Review section defines three basic alternatives. Total conservation, partial development, and total development. These alternatives are then compared in terms of costs and benefits and the extent to which each achieves the objectives outlined in the preceding section.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force makes three specific recommendations -- concrete steps it believes can lead to substantial benefits in open space preservation and compatible residential growth in the Jamaica Pond and Jamaica Plain areas. The following section outlines these recommendations and the basis upon which they were formulated.

I. The Jamaica Pond Sector

The Jamaica Pond sector, that neighborhood immediately adjacent to the Pond and the Arnold Arboretum, has a unique rural quality which must be maintained. The sector is one of the most picturesque areas in Boston with lovely rolling hills and wooded terrain. Approximately 320 of the sector's 950 acres are maintained as a linear park providing a visual green belt connecting the major open spaces of downtown Boston to Franklin Park. Another 200 acres are privately maintained as predominantly open space by institutions and owners of residential estates similar to the Cabot property.

Traditionally, the local municipality has had the responsibility of controlling the character of its neighborhoods through zoning codes and other regulatory measures. We believe the City of Boston has the responsibility to preserve the character of this area. Without

question, the precedent set by its decision here will ultimately affect the entire Jamaica Pond sector.

Therefore, We Recommend:

1. The spirit of the present zoning should be retained throughout the entire Jamaica Pond sector.

The phrase "spirit of the present zoning" was first used by the Citizens Advisory Committee. To the Committee and to us, the phrase entails limiting the amount of development approximately to currently permissible levels. However, other constraints of the zoning code might well be modified where appropriate in order to maximize open space and preserve visual green buffers. For instance, variances would permit clustering of units, thereby avoiding destructive sprawling sub-divisions. This sense of the "spirit of present zoning" also means that heights of structures would be limited. High rise structures should not be allowed to intrude above the tree line on parcels surrounding the scenic Pond area. Furthermore, since the sector's streets, mass transit system and public facilities are not designed to handle significantly increased service loads, density of development should approximate current levels.

Recommendation #1 is at the heart of the Task Force's approach to maintaining the character of the Jamaica Pond sector. Implementation of this recommendation would achieve the major objectives of the Jamaica Plain community, namely preservation of the visual character of the Pond area and limitation of the amount of development. In addition, this recommendation points toward two other objectives: (1) reduced land speculation, and (2) stabilized land values.

Reduced land speculation and stabilized land values are natural results of a stable, clearly defined land use policy. They are desirable ends because they imply reduced pressure for intensive development, and because they imply land values set at levels low enough to allow a progressive open space policy for the entire area.

II. The Cabot Estate

If recommendation #1 is adopted, an open space program for the Cabot Estate may be achieved in either of two ways -- strictly limited partial development or total conservation. The Task Force believes that either of these alternatives would result in an acceptable solution given the objectives of the Jamaica Plain community. However, from the standpoint of the broader metropolitan area, one of these alternatives is clearly preferable -- total conservation.

The Cabot Estate is an irreplaceable parcel of land that is both contiguous to and compatible with the present park system. The Estate would make an excellent addition to the metropolitan park system which is now seriously over-crowded. As leisure time increases, the need for parkland will increase correspondingly. However, the acquisition of this parcel should not be undertaken by city funds alone for three reasons.

First, since the City of Boston has limited resources, it has been forced to develop a set of priorities for open space acquisition and development. These priorities were developed in 1968 by the Parks and Recreation Department partially as a result of a study

prepared by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. First priority has been given to waterfront recreation development; second priority has been given to development of active recreation facilities. Development of passive facilities rates third priority. Since the Task Force concluded that the best use of the Cabot Estate would be for passive recreation, total acquisition of the site with city funds would normally rate a third priority.

Second, development of a recreation area at the Cabot site would benefit a broader group than Boston residents alone. Since the parcel borders on the Town of Brookline, major benefits would accrue to that town as well. In addition, this development would be part of a major linear park facility which would provide much needed open space for the entire metropolitan area.

Third, the Cabot Estate is part of a corridor of large parcels of predominantly undeveloped land which stretches to the southwest from Jamaica Pond. The existence of this undeveloped land presents a unique opportunity for the preparation of a rational land use plan which would complement existing land uses in contiguous neighborhoods including Jamaica Plain. The Task Force anticipates that such a plan will call for the retention of major areas of the corridor as undeveloped open space. Should this conclusion prove correct, clearly the City of Boston would not have sufficient resources to purchase outright with its own funds all of the desirable open space in the area. Therefore, it is essential that any action taken on the Cabot Estate set the clear

precedent that acquisition of open space in this corridor is a program of metropolitan impact deserving significant financial support from the state and federal governments.

While the Task Force favors total acquisition of the site, provided that state and federal financial assistance is available, we believe that it is imperative that the price paid for the land be no higher than the economic value of the parcel if it were developed at the density permitted under present zoning. The acquisition of this parcel sets an important precedent for the entire open space corridor stretching to the southwest from Jamaica Pond. If an inflated price is paid for this land, then the possibility of preserving other important parcels, including Hellenic College, markedly diminishes. Prices on other parcels considered desirable additions to the public parkland will increase, and the amount of land which can be purchased will be reduced at any given level of expenditure. Since it is financially unrealistic to expect all of the open space in this corridor to be purchased by public bodies, open space objectives for certain parcels of land will have to be achieved by controlling private development using the zoning process. Therefore, if land values are inflated, it will become much more difficult to limit the intensity of development because the higher land cost will have to be spread over a greater number of units in order to make any development economically feasible. Public acquisition of the estate at an inflated price would upset land values and insure that private development or remaining parcels would have to be excessively dense to be profitable. The character of the area would thereby be destroyed.

Therefore, We Recommend:

2. The City of Boston acquire the Cabot Estate provided:

   A. That financial contributions of approximately 75 percent of the total cost can be obtained from a combination of the following sources:

      * U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Title VII Program

      * U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Land and Water Conservation Fund

      * State of Massachusetts - Self Help Program

      * Metropolitan District Commission

      * Town of Brookline

      * Private sources including individuals, trusts, and foundations

   B. That the acquisition price of the parcel be based on the economic value of the land developed at densities allowable under current zoning.

With regard to the first proviso, it should be made clear that the funds being requested here are incremental funds made available to the City because of the unique metropolitan importance of this project. This request will not, therefore, jeopardize other proposed City of Boston projects for which applications have been or will be made. Although we cannot state with certainty that sufficient funds can be obtained from these sources, we are confident that this is an achievable plan especially if active support is received from community groups and residents of the area. We note specifically that the MDC has indicated a willingness to contribute at least $150,000 to $200,000 toward the project.

We also note that the Selectmen of the Town of Brookline by a resolution of July 12, 1971, have acknowledged an obligation to participate financially.

If the site can be acquired under these terms, it should be developed for relatively passive uses such as picnic areas, walking trails, a meadow park, and a wetland nature trail.

Consistent with the report of the Boston Landmarks Commission, at least two of the distinctive structures on the site -- the Cabot House and the Nutwood House -- should be rehabilitated and preserved. If sufficient funds are available, the Oakwood House also should be preserved.

Although the Task Force believes that a wide variety of uses for these structures would be consistent with passive development of the site, we do not believe if it is desirable or necessary to make specific recommendations for the use of these houses at this time.

No environmental changes should take place on the Estate for a six-month period. Implicit in this recommendation is a further recommendation that no zoning changes be allowed by the City during this six-month period. If the City were to begin to prepare applications for federal and state funds immediately, these applications could be ready for submission within three months. Once these applications are submitted, we have been informed that a decision could be made by the relevant local and federal agencies within three months. As a result, it seems highly likely that the City would know whether or not major financial assistance was available for acquisition of

this land within six months. If at the end of this six-month period it becomes clear that the federal and state governments will not participate to a significant extent and/or that the price for the parcel is substantially inflated, major sections of the Estate should be preserved through the use of the planned development area process (PDA).

The Task Force has set the following priorities for preservations:

> In order to preserve the pastoral quality of Jamaica Pond, we place highest priority on preservation of a green buffer strip averaging 200 feet wide bordering on Perkins Street and on preservation of the meadow leading to and including the hilltop area which is the site of the Cabot House.
>
> In order to assure the flow and quality of runoff into Jamaica Pond, we place high priority on preservation of the stream area at the intersection of the Sargent Crossway and Perkins Street.
>
> In order to maintain the wooded character of the area, we give priority to the slope bordering on Chestnut Street.

To the extent feasible, those areas preserved under the partial development approach should be open to the general public for passive recreation uses. Title to these open lands could be conveyed to the City or retained by the owner with a public conservation easement. In the event this partial development alternative is pursued, every effort should be made to rehabilitate at least two and possibly three of the existing houses; future use of these houses would, of course, be limited to those uses consistent with immediately adjacent residential areas.

Defining those areas of the site that must be preserved defines also those areas which are of secondary priority and may be developed. These areas are the northern slope, the western slope and certain areas surrounding the wetland. If this development is to be allowed, it should only be allowed within the spirit of the present zoning laws. Under the present zoning, the developer could build approximately 85 detached single family homes. This would clearly be undesirable. The inflexible geometric requirements of single family zoning would create a subdivision which would destroy all value of the site as preserved woodland or open space. It would be feasible to allow the developer to moderately increase the number of units built under the PDA process to encourage him to concentrate development on the site to preserve priority open space areas, without compromising their character.

III. The Open Space Corridor

The Cabot Estate should not be treated as an isolated entity. It is part of a major corridor of open space whose center segment follows the Boston/Brookline border. It has particular significance because it is the only remaining open area of such size in the heart of the Boston metropolitan region.

Under the joint chairmanship of the Boston and Brookline Conservation Commissions, a committee has been working all summer on the concept of a green corridor in Boston, Brookline, and

Newton. Other members of this group now known as the Charles-to-Charles Corridor Committee are the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Brookline Planning Department, the Newton Conservation Commission and Planning Department, and the three necessary state agencies: the Department of Natural Resources, the Metropolitan District Commission, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The middle segment of the corridor from Jamaica Pond to VFW Parkway has been identified as stage one.

We understand that a draft report concentrating on the open space opportunities of stage one will be issued soon. Decisions on the Cabot Estate need not be deferred until this planning process is completed because we believe our recommendations for the Cabot Estate will not foreclose any important options for the remaining corridor land.

Therefore, We Recommend:

3. The Charles-to-Charles Corridor Committee should continue its study and a joint use open space and development plan should be formulated for the entire corridor from the Charles River in the Sawmill Brook area adjacent to Newton to the Charles River at the Fens.

In evaluating the corridor in terms of fulfilling open space priorities and opportunities at city, regional, and state levels, the Committee should analyze a range of tools varying from total acquisition to guidelines for development, as well as develop strategy and programs for implementation. In addition, the Committee should work with neighborhood groups and interested citizens. These local citizens

* should be given the opportunity to review preliminary drafts of the study and its recommendations; and
* should become involved in implementation of the recommendations where appropriate.

PART TWO

Introduction

Mayor White directed the Task Force to answer three basic questions: What would be the impact of residential development on the open space character of the Cabot Estate and Jamaica Pond Sector? What areas of the site should be acquired or otherwise preserved? How can the City best pursue its open space objectives in the Jamaica Pond area?

To answer these questions, the Cabot site must be evaluated in terms of its aesthetic and historic interest, its noted architecture and natural beauty. The eventual disposition of the site holds many financial implications for the city and community. Further, these considerations must be evaluated in the contest of: 1) the surrounding Jamaica Plain area; 2) local community goals; 3) city-wide objectives; 4) the resources available; and 5) the feasibility of achieving a range of alternatives.

THE CHALLENGE

The Cabot Estate

The Cabot Estate consists of 22.8 acres of rolling, predominantly wooded land overlooking Jamaica Pond. Approximately the same size as the Boston Public Gardens, it forms a land wedge between Perkins and Chestnut Street on the south and east and abuts Sargent Crossway and the Boston-Brookline line on the west and north. The property is situated such that its rising wooded hills form the

northern backdrop of Jamaica Pond at a key visual point in Olmsted Park. The Estate constitutes the northern-most point of a north-south corridor of privately-owned estates, farms, woodlands, and institutions extending to the Newton boundary. As the closest section in the corridor to Boston, and the first area in this corridor to be proposed for extensive development, the eventual disposition of the Cabot Estate will to a significant degree, affect the course of land use throughout this area.

The present owner, Pasquale Franchi, acquired the property on July 1, 1969 for $1,022,710, or approximately $1.00 per square foot, and is now sole owner. Previous to Mr. Franchi's acquisition, the property had three principal owners: Samuel Cabot, with whom the whole site is now identified, owned the west half of the property. Charles M. Storey held the northeast corner while Samuel L. Gwin had title to the southeast corner. Mr. Franchi, as sole owner, is proposing a change in zoning and use -- from the previous S-.3, single family use to a H-3 designation appropriate for the construction of high rise, luxury apartments.

For purposes of description and review, the Task Force identified nine areas on the tract distinctive for their topographical or ecological features. These areas are: the road frontage,

the Chestnut Street woodland, the stream, the wetland, the west slope, the hilltop, the meadow, the north slope, and the landmark houses (see Map Insert #1). All who visit the Estate come away deeply impressed to have found the quiet and seclusion of thickly wooded glades and soft open meadows so close to the city. The flavor of the experience is difficult to capture short of actually walking through the grounds.

A member of the Task Force, Dr. Lorin Nevling, Curator, Arnold Arboretum and Gray Herbarium, Harvard University, has had long experience with the Cabot grounds, and in the following, he presents a naturalist's evaluation of the flora and fauna of the site, its topographical features and its function in the ecosystem of the area:

The road frontage is a strip of land on the south and east boundaries of the property averaging 200 feet in depth. The strip acts as a visual buffer between the street and the interior of the Estate. As automobile traffic has increased along Chestnut and Perkins Street in recent years, the strip has played an increasingly important role in pollution dimunition. Soil bacteria convert carbon monoxide to carbon dioxide and the latter is used by green plants as

the carbon source in the formation of sugars through the photosynthetic process. As a by-product of photosynthesis the plants give off oxygen providing man with a necessary commodity.

The Chestnut Street woodland is notable for a mixed deciduous/evergreen grove of natural origin. Dominant trees are oaks (Quercus sp.), and hemlock (Tsuga canadensis). The understory is characterized primarily by an herbaceous layer consisting of False Lily-of-the-Valley (Maianthemum canadensis) and in some places by False Spikenard (Smilacina racemosa). The general absence of a well-defined shrub layer is an indication that the vegetation in this area is in a mature stage. This type of woodland extends to the southwest along Perkins Street and as the exposure becomes more southerly the dominant trees are Beech (Fagus grandifolia), oaks of both the red and white group, and Eastern White Pine (Pinus strobus). An extremely large evergreen screen of Hemlock parallels Perkins Street at this point. Slightly to the west, and rear, of this Hemlock screen is located a Beech tree reputed to be the largest in Massachusetts. The remainder of the property abutting Perkins Street is in natural mixed woodland except for a very large specimen of Sycamore (Platanus sp.) located near the stream crossing. Also located in this area are a number of small Crabapple trees (Malus sp.).

The stream is located in the southwestern corner of the property and serves as an integral part of the watershed system originating in the Sargent Estate. Ground and surface water from the Sargent

Estate feeds into the Sargent Pond. A small stream arises there and carries water from the pond through a culvert under the Sargent Crossway. This stream makes a right angle turn and continues to the southwest corner of the Cabot Estate, through a culvert under Perkins Street, and finally into Jamaica Pond. Since this stream is an important source of water for Jamaica Pond it is protected under the Hatch Act which requires the quantity and quality of water be maintained. At least one aquatic plant, watercress (Nasturtium officinale), is found inhabiting the stream itself. The stream also serves as a breeding grounds for amphibians, most notably for members of the genus Rana.

The wetland area is part of the watershed system immediately to the north and east of the stream. During heavy periods of flow, the wetland serves as a reservoir, absorbing large quantities of surface runoff. The area generally is devoid of large trees although the margins, and the area immediately adjacent to the stream, are characterized by American Elm (Ulmus americanus), Sycamore and Red Maple (Acer rubrum). The dominant herb in the wetland is Stinging Nettle (Urtica dioica); other herbs common to the area are Blackberry (Rubus sp.), Daylily (Hemerocallis sp.), Bouncing-Bet (Saponaria officinalis), Jewelweed (Impatiens capensis), and numerous species of grasses and hedges.

The west slope is a relatively steep, wooded area immediately west of the Cabot House. The area has several distinctive rock

outcroppings. The vegetation is an open, mixed evergreen/ deciduous woodland which in some parts is less mature than that previously described for the northern road frontage area. Oaks, Eastern White Pine, American Elm, and Paperback Birch (Betula alba) are the dominant tree species. Understory plants include large stands of False Lily-of-the-Valley, Asters (Aster sp.), Periwinkle (Catharanthus roseus), and Pokeberry (Phytolacca americana).

The hilltop is the predominant topographical feature of the site. Outstanding views exist of Jamaica Pond as well as downtown Boston. The terrain at the hilltop is relatively level. The combination of the view and the level terrain undoubtably induced prior owners to locate three of the five existing houses on the hilltop. A wide variety of attractive plantings surround each of the houses but the most important area is the Cabot House. Blocks of single species of conifers have been planted here for aural pleasure. The trees were purposefully arranged to whistle and rustle melodiously through wind action. Small screens of Hemlock are found and the plantings surrounding the base of the base of the building are typical for the turn of the century. A large Tulip-tree (Liriodendron tulipifera) is found on the Pond side as is a large specimen of Climbing Hydrangea (Hydrangea anomala ssp. petiolaris). The terrace garden is borded with Yews (Taxus sp.) as is the pathway leading to the great lawn. The entrance to the great lawn is flanked by Flowering Dogwood (Cornus florida) and Flowering Crabapples (Malus sp.). The intent was to display

the light-flowered trees against a dark-green background of Yews. Daffodils (Narcissus sp.) further accentuate the pathway. The meadow is man-made and is about three times as long as it is deep. The long axis of the lawn parallels Perkins Street and extends from the base of the terrace to the Hemlock screen.

In addition to these plantings, the glen immediately to the east of the Cabot house has been carefully landscaped so as to introduce evergreen Rhododendrons (Rhododendron sp.) and Daffodils without intruding into the natural setting of Hemlock, Beech, and Black Cherry (Prunus serotina).

The north slope is a steep area extending from the hilltop to the northern boundary of the property. This slope is heavily wooded, primarily with mature Oaks. A shrub layer generally is absent and many of the small herbaceous plants mentioned earlier re-occur here. Inaddition, spectacular plants of Jack-in-the-Pulpit (Arisaema triphyllum) and pink Lady's Slipper (Cypripedium sp.) are to be found. At the crest of the hill the Oaks give way to Black Cherry and immature trees of the American Chestnut (Castanea dentata). The latter species is no longer known in maturity since the advent of the chestnut blight. The former presence of large Chestnut trees may have been the basis for naming the Nutwood house. The origin of the name Oakwood for another house is obvious.

As a result of the heavily wooded nature of the area and its tranquility a number of animal species are to be found on the site. The greatest numbers of animal species are present in the spring and fall during the migratory season. The largest mammals on the grounds seem to be racoons.

The buildings on the Cabot site are a significant asset to the conservation interest in the Estate by virtue of their architectural and historical merits. The recently prepared Boston Landmarks Commission*, July 1971, reviewed these features of the Cabot Estate buildings:

"The Cabot house is a wooden, mansard-roofed structure not unlike Nutwood, it has gables, bays, proches, and dormers, a polychrome slate roof, and decorative boardwork on the clapboard facades. The Cabot extension changes the building from a ranbling wooden Victorian house to a stone twentieth century mansion of English medieval derivation. Inside, the Shaw section retains its original mantels and woodwork, while the Cabot section contains a handsome long panelled library entirely in keeping with the imposing stone exterior. Both sections of the house are of high architectural quality; only their juxtaposition is a little unnerving

"Nutwood is an excellent, well preserved example of wooden domestic architecture of the 1860's. Basically square in mass, it has bays, dormers, and horizontal and vertical decorative boarding or stickwork on the clapboard facades. The color scheme of dark red and brown enhances the Stick Style effect, and vines romantically cling to the bays

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* See Appendix 1.

and projections. Most important, the rural setting compliments the design of the house, which opens itself out to the landscape on all sides. Inside, the house preserves nearly all of its original architectural features -- staircase, mantels, moldings, and the like.

"Oakwood, like Nutwood, is an excellent, well preserved example of a wooden suburban house of its period. Since the period is a third of a century later than that of Nutwood, the style and character of the house are different, but a common denominator is a conscious orientation toward the site. Stylistically, the house is a subtle blend of Shingle Style and Colonial Revival influences. Its brown shingle covering and open plan (including an angled dining room wing) are Shingle Style; its gabled roof, the symmetry of its south facade, and some of its exterior and interior details (porch columns, mantels) are Colonial Revival. It is a free and original design, characteristic of the best American country-house architecture of the beginning of the twentieth century and entirely appropriate to the landscape in which it is set."

In its conclusion the Commission states: "The architectural history of the Cabot Estate is obviously not yet completely written. The leasing of the houses to various tenant groups is a post-Franchi chapter in the story, accompanied by the withholding of the kind of of basic maintenance that the previous owners had provided. If the present situation goes on too much longer, the buildings will deteriorate to the extent that they will be uneconomic to preserve." The Commission also noted that the architectural merit of the houses in question

is directly tied to their relationship to the site. All three take advantage of the high elevation, good exposure, and beautiful view of Jamaica Pond.

II. The Jamaica Pond Sector

To place the question of the Cabot Estate property in proper perspective, the Task Force examined the present open space and residential characteristics of the Jamaica Pond sector - the area adjacent to the site.*

The Jamaica Pond sector, approximately 950 acres in area, has traditionally been enjoyed for its pastoral quality. During the colonial era, the Pond area was a summer resort for wealthy Bostonians; it later developed in the early 1800's into a community of gentlemen farmers. During the latter part of the 1800's, the Olmsted Park system was created.

Substantial changes in the open space character of this area came with the construction of the Arborway trolley after World War I, and the need for residential housing after World War II. The introduction of mass transit led to the development of the Centre Street district while post-war housing demand brought about the subdivision of Moss Hill. Since the early 1950's there has been a steady demand for increased residential development in the sector. In the last fifteen years it has been estimated that 20 acres of public park land have been lost to various forms of new construction. Yet it must be noted that a large percentage (about 55%) of the 950 acres is still maintained either as private or public open space. The Jamaica Pond district

* The area designated the Jamaica Pond sector is that residential area of Boston within which the Cabot Estate is located. For purposes of statistical analysis, the boundaries are defined by the Federal Census Tract number 1201. These boundaries are indicated on the accompanying map.

has thereby retained a rural quality unique to the Boston area. (see map insert)

The major active public open space area is the Jamaica Pond section of Olmsted Park. This sector covers approximately 100 acres. It contains both active and passive recreational opportunities. Active uses include baseball, boating, bike trails, jogging and barbecuing. Passive uses include walking trails, fishing, and sitting areas. This park also serves as a visual green belt, and provides for open space conservation as well as the protection of water quality and flow. The Arnold Arboretum is the major passive public open space in the area; it consists of approximately 220 acres. The Jamaica Pond-Olmsted Park-Arnold Arboretum complex is a major element of the City's open space system.

A large amount of open space, approximately 130 acres, is maintained by institutions in the Jamaica Pond sector. These institutions are the Hellenic College, the Nazareth School, St. Paul the Maronite Church, and the Faulkner Hospital. This land is relatively undeveloped and major portions of the properties are devoted to rural landscape. A similar quality of rural open space in the Jamaica Pond sector is preserved by owners of residential estates. These properties are similar to the Cabot Estate. The homes are large and the grounds are well landscaped.

A rational land use plan must be developed for the Jamaica Pond sector, if the percentage of open space in the area is to remain constant in this decade. The loss of 20 acres of public parkland in the last 15 years has already established a trend that sound planning could reverse.

Over and above this land loss, various developments in the Jamaica Pond area have tended to encroach upon its open space character. The following examples of recent or proposed construction indicate what the future may hold for remaining areas of undeveloped land. These represent four distinct types of land development.

Parkside Drive is a subdivision of single-family homes in the Moss Hill section of Jamaica Plain. It is a continuation of development according to present S-.3 zoning. This type of development is an example of relatively inefficient land use from an open space preservation point of view.

The Jamaicaway Towers development is a 30-story luxury high-rise apartment complex. The floor area ratio is about seven times that permitted under S-.3 zoning. This is roughly the same kind of development that is proposed for the Cabot site.

Fairgreen Place is a luxury condominium development of clustered town houses located in Brookline. The surrounding open space is adequately preserved and landscaped and represents a relatively efficient use of land from an open space viewpoint. The overall density is slightly less than that of S-.3 zoning. Various partial development proposals advanced for the Cabot Estate are of this nature.

Faulkner Hospital in Jamaica Plain is an example of expansion of an existingdevelopment already located in an open space area. The Current proposal calls for a new 8-story hospital. Such expansion generates further service loads in traffic and parking, and naturally reduces open space.

The Jamaica Pond sector is a stable, middle-class community, family-oriented and residential in character. Over the past decade, the population has remained stable relative to the city as a whole. The median income is substantially higher than that of the City of Boston. The neighborhood is comprised mostly of family units; housing is generally of the single or multi-family type. The vast majority of land in the Jamaica Pond sector is zoned for single family homes, either S-.3 or S-.5. A small portion of the area along Centre Street is zoned R-.5 for multi-family dwellings.

Owner occupancy is very high in the area; in 1970, 51% of the units were owner occupied compared to 27% for the city. The median value of owner occupied units for the Jamaica Pond sector was $29,800 compared to $19,500 for the City of Boston.

The condition of the structures in the area is excellent and the vacancy rate recorded in 1970 for this area is very low, one percent. (consult Appendix for relevant statistics.)

The Cabot Estate site is located in the Agassiz Public School district and presently (see chart on next page) the existing enrollment is over the recommended capacity of the four elementary schools in the district.

AGASSIZ DISTRICT - SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: PRESENT & PROJECTED

Existing Enrollment*	Recommended Capacity**	Projected net gain in seats from new Murphy School***
1,175	1,015	140

However, when the Murphy School is completed, the district will be able to absorb an additional 140 pupils. In addition to the public schools, two parochial schools are located in the Jamaica Pond sector. Furthermore, there are several other parochial as well as private schools in the vicinity of the district.

The only commercial center within the Jamaica Pond sector is located along Centre Street; this is the local business district. Other similar areas are located outside the sector in Brookline and Boston. Major shopping districts are found in Brookline, West Roxbury and the suburban shopping centers.

The major arterials for circulation of traffic in the Jamaica Pond sector are the Jamaicaway-Arborway, Perkins Street, and Centre Street. The street layout in this area is considered inefficient. The above arteries form the major north-southwest route into the city. The MDC several years ago stated that these thoroughfares had reached full carrying capacity.

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* Distribution of White & Non-White Pupils in the City of Boston, October 1, 1970. Department of Education, Boston.

** Sargent Report

*** Enrollment of new Murphy School (800) minus sum of enrollment of Agassiz School and present over enrollment.

Public transport is available at Brookline Village (the Riverside line) and along Centre Street (the Arborway line). The Centre Street line may be phased out. No new public transit facilities are planned.

OBJECTIVES

I. Purpose of Objectives

In the Objectives section, the Task Force describes and reviews city and community objectives. First, there is a general discussion of the City's open space objectives. Next, the Task Force evaluates the City's residential goals in the Jamaica Pond sector. These goals include maintaining the sector's family-oriented housing stock; and promoting development which is in conformity with city-wide needs.

Finally, the Task Force reviews open space and residential objectives, from the viewpoint of the Jamaica Plain community, dealing with such important local priorities as retention of the character of the present sector, limitation of the area's density; addition of parkland where appropriate, and encouragement of home ownership.

II. City Open Space Objectives

The present Administration recognizes the increasing demand for public open space which will provide recreational opportunities of varying character. This demand for recreation can be expected to intensify as income and education levels rise and as leisure time increases. Accordingly, in 1968, the Boston Redevelopment Authority undertook a study to determine: 1) the adequacy of local recreational facilities; and 2) the degree of recreational need and the specific recreational requirements of each area of the City. As a result of this study and of practical experience in park planning, the Parks and Recreation Department has developed a set of city-wide priorities for future capital expenditure in the area of recreation.

The Parks and Recreation Department has placed first priority on land acquisition along the waterfront. This goal is consistent with the findings of the BRA study which indicated that out of the three areas without adequate parkland, * two border on the harbor.

* The North End, East Boston, and the South End

The Parks and Recreation Department, therefore, intends to purchase property along the waterfront, concentrating on parcels in East Boston and the North End. These will be developed as waterfront facilities serving a neighborhood as well as a regional function.

The Parks and Recreation Department has determined that development of active recreation facilities of a second priority. Active facilities would include playfields, playgrounds, and neighborhood parks providing tot areas, basketball, hockey, and other relatively physical activities. The BRA study has outlined the areas of the city where the need for active recreation opportunities is greatest and where inadequacies in the number and type of facilities presently exist. The Parks Department has attempted to give first consideration to these areas. Accordingly, the Department has tried to provide facilities as follows:

Playfields	South End, Downtown, North End, Jamaica Plain
Playgrounds	Downtown, North End, South Boston, East Boston, South End, Roxbury-North Dorchester, Dorchester
Active Neighborhood Parks	Brighton, East Boston, North End, South End, Downtown, North End, Dorchester

Passive recreation facilities are considered to be third priority, but only because the first two priorities are so pressing. The development of these facilities is a current city need which can be expected to grow. The Parks Department has attempted to provide passive facilities

as a part of playgrounds and neighborhood complexes; in this way the more important need for active facilities is addressed without totally ignoring the secondary need for passive areas.

III. Jamaica Plain Priorities

The Parks and Recreation Department has determined a set of priorities for open space development in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood. After surveying the existing facilities and the population they served, the Department recommended that top priority be placed on the expansion of active recreation facilities.

In Jamaica Plain, major emphasis is now being placed on improving existing playfields. Jamaica Plain's four playfields -- Daisy, Pinebank, Murphy, and Jefferson -- do not meet nationally recommended standards for playfield acreage per 1000 population. These playfields are fairly well distributed, however. No Jamaica Plain resident is further than $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from such a facility. A secondary emphasis has been placed on providing additional playground facilities. Approximately 20 percent of the community's population is unserved by standard size playgrounds. About half of these residents are served by smaller facilities. Further, the City has emphasized the development of active vest pocket parks. Jamaica Plain is now relatively well served in this category. Only 14 percent of its population lives more than one-half mile from a facility of this type.

A second priority, after expanding active recreation areas, is in developing more passive facilities. Although the need for passive recreation is not yet a crisis, it is certain that substantial use would be made of such a facility. The volume of people utilizing the Jamaica Pond - Olmsted system increases steadily year by year. With the future in mind, the priority would be higher for prospective acquisitions which would otherwise be lost to development.

IV. City Residential Objectives

Approximately 520 acres in the Jamaica Pond Sector are maintained as open space; the remaining 330 acres are devoted to housing. This combination of residential and open space areas constitutes a neighborhood that is unique in Boston. The Boston Redevelopment Authority, in its 1965 General Plan for the City of Boston, took this fact into consideration in assessing the future residential needs of the area.

The General Plan concluded that the family-oriented character of the Jamaica Pond Sector should be maintained. As pointed out earlier, the neighborhood is comprised of single and small multi-family dwelling units. Accordingly, the City has encouraged preservation of the present housing stock (see Page) and rehabilitation of the deteriorated structures. It has initiated a program to renovate 12,000 units in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood. In addition, the City has attempted to encourage development which is in harmony with existing neighborhood streets, facilities, public utilities and open spaces. Due to increased demand for housing and the need to maintain and expand the tax base, the City has emphasized additional housing development. However, further development should not be of such density that the already overburdened system of roadways, public transport, and public facilities are taxes beyond their capacity. In addition, the open space assets of the neighborhood must not be destroyed by the input of additional housing units.

In creating the Task Force, the need was felt to consult the Jamaica Plain community directly concerning the disposition of the Cabot Estate. The objectives of the community most directly affected by the proposal development naturally had to be taken into account. To this end community representes were appointed to the Task Force, attended all meetings, participated in discussion, and presented information to the group. Other community representatives contributed in various ways, including giving Task Force members a first hand look at the Cabot Estate, by conducting a field trip of the site. A special meeting was held at Curtis Hall in Jamaica Plain for the public at large to present its view directly to the Task Force.

A general consensus of opinion arose from these contacts. Many citizens felt that the woodland beauty and rural air that gives Jamaica Plain its identity is endangered. In the past 15 years, in this community alone, over 20 acres of once beautiful parkland has been lost, and most cases to non-profit and non-tax paying institutions. There is the broader concern that in the past 22 years the City of Boston has lost, by sale or gift, 1008 acres of parkland leaving for its citizenry only 2248 acres. It is a goal of the Jamaica Plain community to improve maintenance of existing parkland and to procure additional acreage wherever possible.

The community feels that the disposition of the Cabot Estate is highly important in its effect on the Jamaica Pond-Olmsted Park section. Because of its natural beauty and proximity to Jamaica Pond, the Cabot Estate enhances this area in its visual effects and contributes to its ecological balance. Personal accounts testify to the feeling by people who use Jamaica Pond of the importance of the rural quality of the Cabot Estate as a backdrop for Jamaica Pond.

The Jamaica Plain community is greatly concerned about the additional traffic that high density development generates. Traffic problems are already having an adverse effect on the Jamaica Pond - Olmsted park system. The inconvenience of traffic congestion diminishes enjoyment of the facilities. Furthermore, parking spills over from a Brookline high-rise development, the Brook House, adding to local congestion and spoiling the view of Leverett Pond. Cars are parked along Pond Street directly adjacent to the Pond. The community looks upon these problems, compounded by the lack of transit at the Cabot site, as major points in the argument against high density development.

Many Jamaica Plain citizens feel that patterns of ownership determine the character of a neighborhood. The residential area surrounding

the Jamaica Pond-Olmstead Park sector is comprised of middle-income home owners. In the past few years, this area has enjoyed an influx of young professional families buying homes and participating in community affairs. These families, as well as those of long standing, realize the importance of a well-knit active community committed to the betterment of the whole City. The community feels that the value of home ownership and the importance of its influence upon a neighborhood and, ultimately, upon the City cannot be too strongly emphasized.

The people in Jamaica Plain feel that high-rise, high-density housing is not in keeping with the present character of the community and may well constitute an unstable influence. They believe that high-rise residents tend to remain uninvolved in the life and problems of a residential community by the very nature of the physical isolation that high-density housing presents. High-rise living generates a set of concerns different from those of residential home owners, thus there is the tendency to remain aloof from the residential community.

Community residents also point to more tangible problems that would result from an influx of population. Although tax revenue will increase, so will the demands for already overtaxed city services such as fire protection, police and schools. In addition, the greater the density of people, the greater will be the problem of pollution and the greater the need for more open space.

Finally, the Jamaica Plain community feels there is a higher sociological principle involved. They point out the fact that a high-rise, high-density housing complex in Jamaica Plain will do nothing but drive home owners out of one of the finest middle income residential areas in Boston. The real estate in the area would then become more attractive and accessible to high-density development and speculation. The end result of such a trend is to eliminate the stabilizing effect of a solid middle class residential community as a stop gap to urban deterioration. The final picture would be one of high-rise luxury dwellings surrounded by crowded declining urban areas.

The consensus community goals, then, are threefold: to provide public access to the Cabot property through acquisition by the City of Boston; to hold population density to the "spirit" of current zoning; to prevent destruction of the Pond area and avoid an increased demand on traffic facilities and public services. The essence of their testimony stresses the quality rather than the quantity of life in their community. It also emphasizes the importance of encouraging pride in the community which will engender in the citizens a sense of civic responsibility.

THREE ALTERNATIVES / ANALYSIS & REVIEW

Introduction:

The open space and residential objectives of the City as well as the local community must now be projected against a series of alternative uses of the Cabot Estate. The Task Force has identified three general alternatives -- Total Conservation; Partial Conservation/Development; and Total Development.

In this section the Task Force describes the proposals, the assumptions underlining each, and the tools available for their implementation. Each alternative is then analyzed and evaluated from the standpoint of four basic considerations. These considerations are of basic concern to the City, the community and the developer.

The cost/benefit factor will analyze both the positive and negative impact of each of the alternatives in terms of seven basic criteria. These criteria are: open space, community facilities and services, tax revenue, traffic, zoning, population and utilities.

The question to be answered under goal achievement is the degree to which each of the alternatives achieves city-wide and community objectives.

Probability of achievement examines the feasibility of an alternative from its economic, legal and political angles.

The last factor, trade-offs, is an attempt to evaluate the gains and losses of one alternative as against another.

I. Total Conservation

The Total Conservation alternative proposes to conserve the entire Cabot Estate site for passive and conservation open space uses. Under this alternative, the entire site would be incorporated into the public park system and be maintained by a public agency, in all likelihood, the Parks and Recreation Department.

A variety of uses are proposed for this alternative: the preservation of the landmark houses with overlooks towards the Pond and downtown Boston; the establishment of picnic groves within the meadow, the Chestnut Street woodland and on the hilltop; and the creation of a system of walking trails around the site. These uses may require some maintainance. Other uses proposed for the Cabot Estate include a wetland nature trail, and a miniature arboretum of domestic plantings. Conservation is proposed for the remaining site areas: the road frontage, the stream area, the west slope, and the north slope.

The buildings on the property offer a wide range of possibilities that could be developed to complement this open space proposal as well as to provide needed services to the community. Since three structures are of considerable architectural importance, (see page 24) in part because of their placement and surroundings, their rehabilitation and active use become an integral part of the total conservation alternative.

The entire site would be acquired under one or more of the following programs:

The City of Boston is eligible to participate in the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's Land and Water Conservation Fund program which is administered locally by the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources. Under this program a public agency can be reimbursed for up to 50 percent of land acquisition/development cost. Assistance is provided for projects ranging from high population-density urban areas to primitive areas; varying in type from bicycle paths to hiking trails, from roadside picnic areas to multi-purpose recreation complexes. Projects receive priority consideration when they are designed to serve urban populations and the public-at-large, when they provide basic rather than elaborate facilities, and when no other funds are available. High priority is assigned to three types of projects:

(1) The acquisition of lands or interest therein and/or development of lands located within urban population centers which will serve basic outdoor recreation needs.

(2) Land interests to be acquired and developed in conjunction with water bodies (reservoirs, natural lakes, seashores, and rivers) which have significant interest.

(3) The acquisition of interests in lands bringing into public ownership high quality or otherwise desirable areas which may be in danger of being irretrievably lost to other uses of less importance to the public or which are subject to great escalations in cost of acquisition.

Structures which are to be used primarily for outdoor recreation activities or as support facilities for outdoor recreation activities

may be funded. In addition, funding may be given to structures and their areas which are to be removed or demolished. Historic structures will not be assisted.

The City of Boston is also eligible to participate in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Open Space Land Program -- a Legacy of Parks. This program consists of the original three Title VII programs which have been combined and modified. The program will assist public bodies in purchasing and developing land for park and recreation purposes; conservation of land and other natural resources; historic, scenic or architectural purposes; beautification of public places or guiding development. Desirable open space programs include block and neighborhood projects, city-wide facilities serving several counties or an entire metropolitan area. Grants under the Legacy of Parks program are at the 50 percent level. High priority is assigned to the following types of projects:

(1) Development of open space in service areas where existing public open space is under 2.5 acres per thousand population.

(2) Open space development in low or moderate housing projects.

(3) Development of recreational facilities on a site accessible to the central city in the already-developed or developing part of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.

(4) Development of open space facilities serving low-income citizens in built-up portions of urban area.

On the state level, the City is eligible through its conservation commission to participate in the Massachusetts "Self-Help" program which is also administered by the Department of Natural Resources. Application is filed through the Boston Conservation Commission. Under this program a conservation commission can be reimbursed for 50 percent of local (non-federal) share of acquisition cost. The geographical area of the Cabot Estate qualifies for the program. In the past approval has been given on a first-come-first-served basis; however, since the demand is so great a set of priorities may have to be developed.

The MDC has expressed interest in purchasing sections of the Cabot Estate property in accordance with its acquisition objectives. The objectives as set forth by the Commission are (1) acquisition of property that stretches from one town to another, (2) acquisition of property along streams and (3) acquisition of property along MDC roadways. Those sections of the Estate that interest the MDC and meet the objectives are the buffer strip along Perkins Street and the wetlands. It appears that MDC Commissioner John Sears would like to acquire the property independently; the MDC would then be eligible to match their share 50-50 by applying for a federal grant. The Commission would not be eligible for "Self-Help" funds, however, because the Department of Natural Resources which administers the program can only grant funds to established City or Town Conservation Commissions.

Analysis of Total Conservation Alternative

Cost/Benefit:

Seven factors were reviewed and analyzed by the Task Force to determine the impact of the total conservation alternative on the Jamaica Pond sector, the City of Boston and the surrounding region. The first of these was the impact of the total conservation alternative on open space requirements.

Everyone who has been even remotely connected with the Cabot Estate is in agreement about the aesthetic qualities of the site. Since the beginning of the Task Force's deliberations, it has been apparent that the

Cabot Estate offered the City of Boston an irreplaceable opportunity to add a priceless parcel of land to its park system. Whether viewed by a professional botanist or by the untrained eye of a passerby, the Estate can be appreciated for what it is -- an immeasurable open space asset. The Task Force has identified many of these assets -- the Stream, the enormous beech tree, the lawn, the plantings surrounding the estate homes, and the variety, quality, and mature growth of its trees. The Estate, in essence, is already a natural park of very high caliber. As such, it is irreplaceable.

In evaluating the impact of this alternative on the open space character of the area, the Task Force is impressed by the crucial role the site plays in preserving the visual aspect and green backdrop of Jamaica Pond. This function is totally achieved by the total conservation alternative.

The conservation alternative provides one more important benefit: an opportunity to add to the amount of parkland in accordance with the master plan of the City. Total acquisition of the Cabot Estate's 22.8 acres will compensate for past loss of more than 1000 acres while providing an additional open space facility for the entire metropolitan region.

Since the land would remain entirely vacant, except for two or three of the landmark houses, no additional public facilities would be

required under the total conservation alternative. It is anticipated that the City's Parks and Recreation Department will maintain the site, if acquired, at a yearly cost of approximately $30,000. This money would be required for maintenance unless the site is leased to a special group or agency. Building maintenance, which is not included in the above expenditure, should be virtually self-supporting, assumed by agencies or groups occupying the premises. One such organization, the Boston-Brookline School for Emotionally Disturbed Children (B.B.H.R.O.) has already approached the Task Force with inquiries about possible utilization of the Cabot Estate. Assuming such a group makes use of the buildings, maintenance costs will thus be minimal with a major portion involving no incremental costs to the City.

While the total conservation alternative does not require additional services or tax the existing public facilities, neither does it provide tax revenue for the City. In this way it is clearly different from the various development alternatives, all of which involve a tax-service mix.

The Cabot Estate is currently producing $28,000 in tax revenue. This amount would be lost if the site becomes public property. An opportunity cost is also involved here. If the property is developed instead of set aside, the potential for tax revenue would be considerably higher than the current assessment.

BRA statistics indicate that, depending upon the density of development, the site would generate between $140,000 (84 units of single family housing) and $927,000 (750 units). Subtracted from these

amounts would be the cost of additional public facilities and services.

It should be noted that total conservation, while not revenue producing, will nevertheless enhance the value of surrounding residential property. Such an indirect benefit must be deducted from the amount of tax revenue lost to the City from potential residential development.

Similarly, the total open space alternative differs from the development proposals with respect to traffic, population and utilities. Traffic and utility loads will not increase appreciably under this plan and, of course, there will be no population changes.

Goal Achievement

The Total Conservation alternative satisfies most of the community's open space objectives. The plan respects the visual and ecological character of the Pond area. It represents an opportunity to put the spirit behind the City's open space priorities into action. The community's good fortune, first to find and then attempt to save a beautiful piece of land, makes a Total Conservation approach to the Cabot Estate symbolic of an urban park regeneration. The Total Conservation alternative does not set any long term precedents for future acquisitions or for consideration of residential development in the Pond area. With its implementation, the community will avoid the destruction of the Pond area by high-density, high-rise, traffic congesting development.

The Total Conservation plan satisfies the City's third priority to save and expand passive open space areas. At the same time the alternative is in conformance with the City's objective of maintaining the family-oriented character of the sector. It also achieves the objective of limiting neighborhood density in consideration of already overburdened roadways, public transport and public facilities.

It is questionable whether an exercise of eminent domain alone would serve to stabilize the surrounding residential area. Speculation would very likely shift to Hellenic College and adjacent areas around the Pond, especially if the acquisition price exceeds the value of land based on current zoning. Any decision concerning the Cabot Estate, to be

effective in achieving the criteria set out by the City or the community, must be linked to a broader series of decisions affecting the entire Jamaica Pond sector.

Probability of Achievement

The Task Force took a very serious look at the implementation tools available to the City to achieve the Total Conservation alternative. As mentioned in our Task Force's review of the federally administered Legacy of Parks Open Space Land Program, land acquisition is eligible for a 50-50 federal grant. Another federal open space acquisition program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, is funded by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and administered by the State's Department of Natural Resources. Up to 50% State aid is offered. The Task Force is convinced that the Cabot Estate property is a priority project as defined by State guidelines and priorities. Commissioner Brownell of the Department of Natural Resources has been approached directly about the possibility of receiving federal aid for acquisition under this program. His response was very encouraging.

Because they are both federally funded, only one of these two programs could be utilized. Maximum federal aid possible for the purchasing agencies would thus be 50% of acquisition cost.

The Metropolitan District Commission has also expressed interest in providing acquisition assistance. While discussions have only been on an informal basis, the Task Force is sufficiently encouraged to report that MDC participation is a very strong possibility.

II. Partial Conservation/Development

The purpose of this alternative is to preserve the major open space opportunities while at the same time allowing for limited and controlled development. The key to this alternative, therefore, is sound planning. A variety of studies had to be undertaken in order to arrive at a series of open space and development alternatives.

The BRA Design staff originally tested seven basic building/open space schemes. After a review of these alternatives by the Task Force, one additional scheme was developed. The eight alternatives in no way represent specific proposals. They merely serve as study models representing different directions for development on the Cabot Estate. The eight alternatives tested vary in form: linear (row house), cluster (garden townhouses), megastructures, and tower (high-rise), as well as in density, 110, 150, 350, 650, and 750 units. The alternatives are as follows: 110 cluster, 150 linear, 150 cluster, 350 linear, 350 cluster, 650 tower, 650 3-towers and 750 3-towers.

The study models are described in detail in the Appendix (see Report, BRA Cabot Estate Summary Study). The open space opportunities for each alternative are indicated on the Open Space Opportunities Chart. Lastly, the manner in which the open space opportunities could be realized for each option is outlined on the chart.

A variety of assumptions have been made concerning the implementation of an open space plan as part of a program of planned development. These assumptions are discussed below.

Those portions of the site proposed for conservation and for active open space use should be conveyed to and maintained by a public agency or conservation foundation. These include the Hilltop, Visitor Center houses, Chestnut Street woodland, the stream area, and the road frontage.

Those portions of the site proposed for passive recreation use could be maintained by acquiring easements. Easements could be acquired either through purchase, gift, or tax abatement. Those areas of the site proposed for limited public use and control include the meadow and the wetland- trails. Other areas would be regulated by zoning (PDA) and the Hatch Act. An area would be controlled through regulation whenever development takes place. Depending upon the specific alternatives, these include the north and west slope, and portions of the wetland and hilltop.

Each of the eight hypothetical alternatives preserves certain portions of the site.

The 110-unit cluster condominium alternative would build on major portions of the wetland, the west and north slopes. The buildings, by remaining to the rear of the property, would be practically invisible from Perkins Street. There would be no development on the portions of the site which front onto Jamaica Pond. This proposal would require the complete filling in of the wetland area.

The 150 unit cluster alternative covers major portions of the site -- the hilltop, the meadow, the wetland, the north slope, the west

slope and the houses. This six-cluster alternative would build in whole or in part on most open space areas of the site. The only portions of the site partially preserved are the road frontage and the north slope. The stream area could be completely preserved.

In contrast to the cluster alternative, the 150-unit linear form alternative would cover the western hillside. Open space opportunities are most extensive under this alternative. The only open space use lost because of development would be conservation of the western hillside. Certain other open space areas, the north slope, the meadow, and the Nutwood house, would be partially restricted.

The 350-unit linear alternative also proposes covering the western hillside. Most areas of the site would be preserved. The major opportunity lost under this alternative is the wetland. Those opportunities which would be restricted include the meadow park, the stream area, the western slope and the north slope.

In the 350-unit megastructure alternative, the major areas of building coverage are on the hilltop. Most areas of the site would be preserved. The major open space opportunities lost are the hilltop picnic area and public vista. Conservation areas partially lost are the west slope and the north slope. The Nutwood house, in addition, would not be preserved. This scheme quite obviously intrudes upon the character of Jamaica Pond.

The 650-unit 1-tower alternative would have buildings covering the hilltop (0^{o} - 5^{o} slope) and Chestnut Street. This alternative

preserves two major open space opportunities: the wetland and the meadow. All other opportunities are in whole or in part lost. Again, the character of Jamaica Pond is even more severely intruded upon.

The 650-unit, 3-tower alternative also has buildings covering the hilltop (0° - 5° slope) but excludes Chestnut Street. The major additional open space opportunities preserved in this as against the 650, 1-tower alternative are the Chestnut Street picnic area and portions of the western hillside.

The major areas of building coverage for the 750-unit, 3-tower alternative are the hilltop (0° - 5° slope), and the open space opportunities preserved are the same as the 650, 3-tower alternative.

Cost Benefit

The partial development alternative which builds on the least amount of land while preserving the greatest amount and variety of open space is the 150-unit linear. Next most advantageous from this viewpoint are the 110-unit cluster and the 350-unit megastructure. These alternatives conserve 87%, 82%, and 89% of the land area respectively. On the other hand, the fact that some of the high rise alternatives cover a smaller portion of the site is offset by their deleterious effects. The structures obliterate views and destroy the Estate's rural character. The augmented residential population would undoubtedly speed its deterioration.

The only open space opportunity lost under the 150-unit linear alternative is conservation of the west slope. Certain other open space areas would be partially restricted from development. These include the north slope, the wetland, the meadow, and Nutwood house. By contrast, the 110-unit cluster alternative loses the complete use of the wetland for conservation and educational purposes. The west and north slopes would be partially restricted.

The 350-unit megastructure alternative eliminates a different set of open space opportunities. The hilltop picnic, the Nutwood house, and the public vista areas are lost. Conservation areas which are partially built upon include the west slope and the north slope. The scenic beauty of Jamaica Pond would be marred by the intrusion of major structures.

Although the 650 and 750-unit tower proposals theoretically preserves the highest percentage (90%) of open space, the density and design would be such as to prohibit the achievement of many priority open space opportunities. These lost assets include the hilltop and picnic areas, the visitor center, and the public vista. There is further danger that the whole tract could be destroyed during the construction process.

Of the models tested by the BRA, the 150-unit cluster alternative provides the fewest public open space alternatives. This is because the unit design calls for several building clusters sited on most of the primary open space sub-areas.

In terms of community facilities and services, one can make three general types of statements concerning the various schemes.

First, studies have revealed that high-rise luxury apartments in Boston generate a minimum number of public school children. A high percentage of children in the luxury income projects go to private schools. For this reason one can assume that the higher density proposal would generate the least percentage of children and the lowest density condominium alternatives the most. The projected number of public school children varies from 59 for the 150-unit condominium alternative to between 9 and 15 for the elevator proposals.

A second basic generalization concerning community facilities is that the higher density proposals would establish a precedent for similar projects in the area. Furthermore, high density apartment developments demand more police and fire protection. The higher density proposals would require more public expenditure for community facilities and services than the lower density alternatives. More important, considering the precedent setting nature of a decision on this parcel, the implication of high density development must be extrapolated across the hundreds of acres of undeveloped land now in private estate holdings.

A last generalization is that the utility system in the Jamaica Pond area is sufficient to handle the proposed increase in density on the Cabot Estate. Should adjoining tracts be similarly developed, this may not hold true.

Traffic congestion is a major concern of the neighborhood as well as the city. Traffic studies have indicated that presently the area surrounding the Cabot Estate is congested. The lower density

alternatives (150/350) would add considerably to this congestion. For this reason certain basic improvements that are required even today would have to be undertaken. These include signalization and channelization. On the other hand, the 650 and 750 units would require even more improvements since more than one driveway would be required on the Cabot Estate. Naturally, dense development following the precedent set for the Cabot Estate would lead potentially to even greater congestion.

As a general rule, the greater the number of units, the larger the city's property tax return. The 110 and 150-unit condominium town house alternatives would annually generate $335,000 and $364,000 respectively. The 350-unit scheme generates from $455,000 to $662,000. A 750-unit scheme would produce approximately $927,000 yearly. The taxes estimate to be generated by 350-condominium units are approximately 80 percent of the 650-unit tax return, because the condominium units are larger and more expensive.

In terms of zoning, all the development schemes other than single-family subdivision require a zoning change.

A partial development scheme would increase the population by between 100 and 1000 families. Development, therefore, might help to stabilize and possibly reverse a city-wide population loss.

Probability of Achievement

The 110, 150, and 350-unit condominium schemes have the highest "marketing" risk since the luxury condominium market has not been tested in Jamaica Plain. This risk could be reduced if these units were marketed

as a mix of condominium and rental units. Furthermore, depending upon the size of the units and the design of the structures, it appears that the 150 and 350-unit scheme could sell or rent for about the same amount and bring a similar rate of return on equity invested by the developer. On the other hand, the marketing of the 110-unit alternative would require the developer to lower the prices to a point which would minimize or eliminate any profitable return.

The probability of achieving the lower density alternatives increases to the extent that the developer's land cost can be reduced. Through the use of park acquisition programs, conservation easements and tax abatements, the land cost to the developer might be reduced and various open space areas preserved.

The 650 and 750-unit schemes have the highest financial and marketing feasibility. The developer is most willing to pursue a high-rise, high-density scheme.

III. Total Development

Total development of the Cabot Estate could take place in two ways. The first would be based upon the existing single family zoning. In the first case, the site could be covered with approximately 85 single family homes, under existing single family zoning. Mr. Franchi's proposal constitutes the second possible form of total development -- 1000 units of both high rise and town houses. This proposal would require a change in zoning. In both cases, there would be little, if any, opportunity for open space preservation.

Mr. Franchi's proposal consists of 1000 units of the following types: 850 units of two 40-story towers and 150 units of town houses. Building would take place on approximately 5.2 acres of the site. In addition to building coverage, the mass and height of the structures as well as the population density of this alternative would eliminate in whole or in part all major open space opportunities of the site. Under S-.3 zoning (9,000 square feet lot per unit, the existing zoning law), the developer could build approximately 85 single family homes. Although 85 single family homes would occupy only 3.3 acres, site preparation would completely destroy the pastoral quality of the entire tract. Level sites for the houses involve considerable reshaping of the topography. In addition, roads, driveways, and utility lines would further destroy the pastoral quality of the site.

A. Total Development: Single Family Proposal

Cost/Benefit

In terms of conservation, a single family development according to existing zoning, i.e. about 85 units, would preserve very little of the aesthetic qualities and park-like landscaping of the site. The process of subdividing the property into quarter acre lots would destroy most of the vegetation and topography. This would result in the destruction of the external visual affect of the site since single family units would be noticeable from the road and the Pond area. Only a very narrow buffer strip along Perkins Street could be preserved.

The major impact of this alternative in terms of community facilities and services relates to schools. An exact figure for the number of new public school children is difficult to assess. For the purposes of analysis, however, one can assume a minimum of approximately 70 new students. The maximum would range up to 130. The assumption here is that a vast majority of students would attend public schools. The minimum figure of 70 public school children would probably not present a burden to the Agassiz school district. In terms of other community facilities and services, it would be extremely unlikely that a density of this magnitude would require major expenditures.

The third major criterion of importance to the City as well as to the community is tax revenue. It has been estimated that the City would realize somewhere in the vicinity of $100,000 per year

on tax revenues for an 85-unit single family home development.

In terms of traffic, the single family alternative would attract some additional traffic to the neighborhood, but this would not be a problem.

The single family alternative would not require a zoning change since the site is presently zoned for single family housing. In addition, no prior City approval is needed by the developer to use this alternative other than the usual building permits, etc.

In terms of population, this scheme would attract approximately 85 new families.

Goal Achievement

Under this alternative the open space character of the site would be destroyed. Neither the community's open space objective of procuring additional parkland nor the city's objective of increasing public recreational facilities would be realized. The rural quality of the Cabot Estate and the visual buffer along Perkins Street would virtually be eliminated.

In terms of residential objectives, the single family alternative would meet the community goals of home ownership and low density low-rise development. The family-oriented character of the area would also be maintained. The amount of additional housing would be small compared to other alternatives. The tax revenue increase would be correspondingly smaller.

Probability Achievement

Due to the fact that a zoning change is not necessary under this alternative, the developer could begin construction immediately. Such action is unlikely at present, but is possible in the future if total or partial acquisition proves unfeasible or is not acceptable to the owner.

Trade-offs

The term trade-off implies the sacrifice of one objective for the gain of a second. Here the gain would be a retention of the present S-.3 zoning and blockage of high density development. This alternative would sacrifice the City's tax revenue gain for development and would completely eliminate open space opportunities.

B. Total Development: 1,000 Unit Proposal

Cost/Benefit

In terms of conservation, a 1,000 unit development would eliminate almost all open space opportunities. The magnitude of the structure and the flow through the area of its occupants would destroy the visual and pastoral qualities of any tracts left undeveloped. The visual intrusion and swollen population would also have a negative impact upon adjacent parkland.

The consequences of this alternative in terms of community facilities and services are difficult to assess. The estimated number

of public school children is 115. This figure takes into account the possibility that the townhouses units would generate a higher proportion of school children than the high-rise units. It is uncertain whether or not this number could be absorbed into the Agassiz district without causing any significant over-crowding. Demand for public services - police, fire, streets and sanitation - would certainly be greater under this alternative. This density of development could establish a precedent for similar projects in the area. Since the existing public services with the exception of utilities are functioning at about full capacity, a significant increase in density would entail corresponding expenditures for public services.

The greatest asset to the City in this alternative are the gross tax revenue and the buying power which 1,000 units represent. Tax revenue is estimated at $990,000 and buying power at $7,300,000. Net tax revenue to the City will be somewhat less after present and anticipated expenditures for public service items are deducted. Because of the development's location, the buying power figure is deceptive. Experience has shown that Brookline and Newton business firms would capture most of this purchsing power. A nearby high-rise development, Jamaica Way Towers, actually runs a limousine service for shoppers to outlying shopping districts in Newton and Brookline.

The major liability of this alternative is its impact on traffic circulation. The existing street system is already congested. In addition, experience has shown that cars would park on the public street. At a

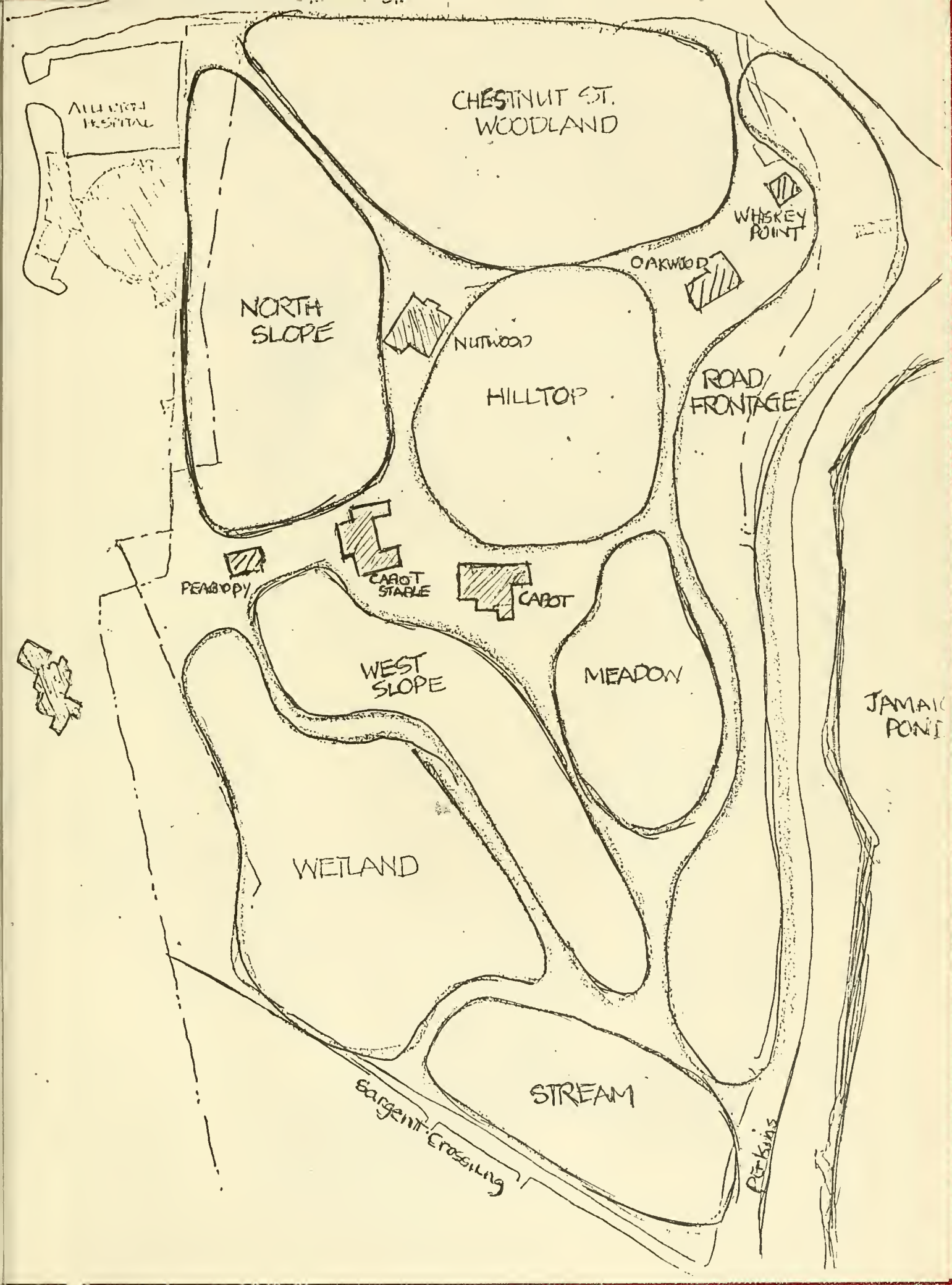
minimum, signalization and channelization improvements would be required at two intersections.

A map change to H-2 would be required for this proposal. This would establish a precedent for the area.

Goal Achievement

Under this alternative the open space objectives of the City and the community would not be realized. The pastoral and visual aspects of the site would be destroyed by the encroachment of high-rise development.

In terms of residential objectives, the 1000-unit development would not be in line with the existing character of the area nor would it be in line with the goals of home ownership and low density housing. This development scheme would provide more housing units and a greater amount of tax revenue than any other alternative.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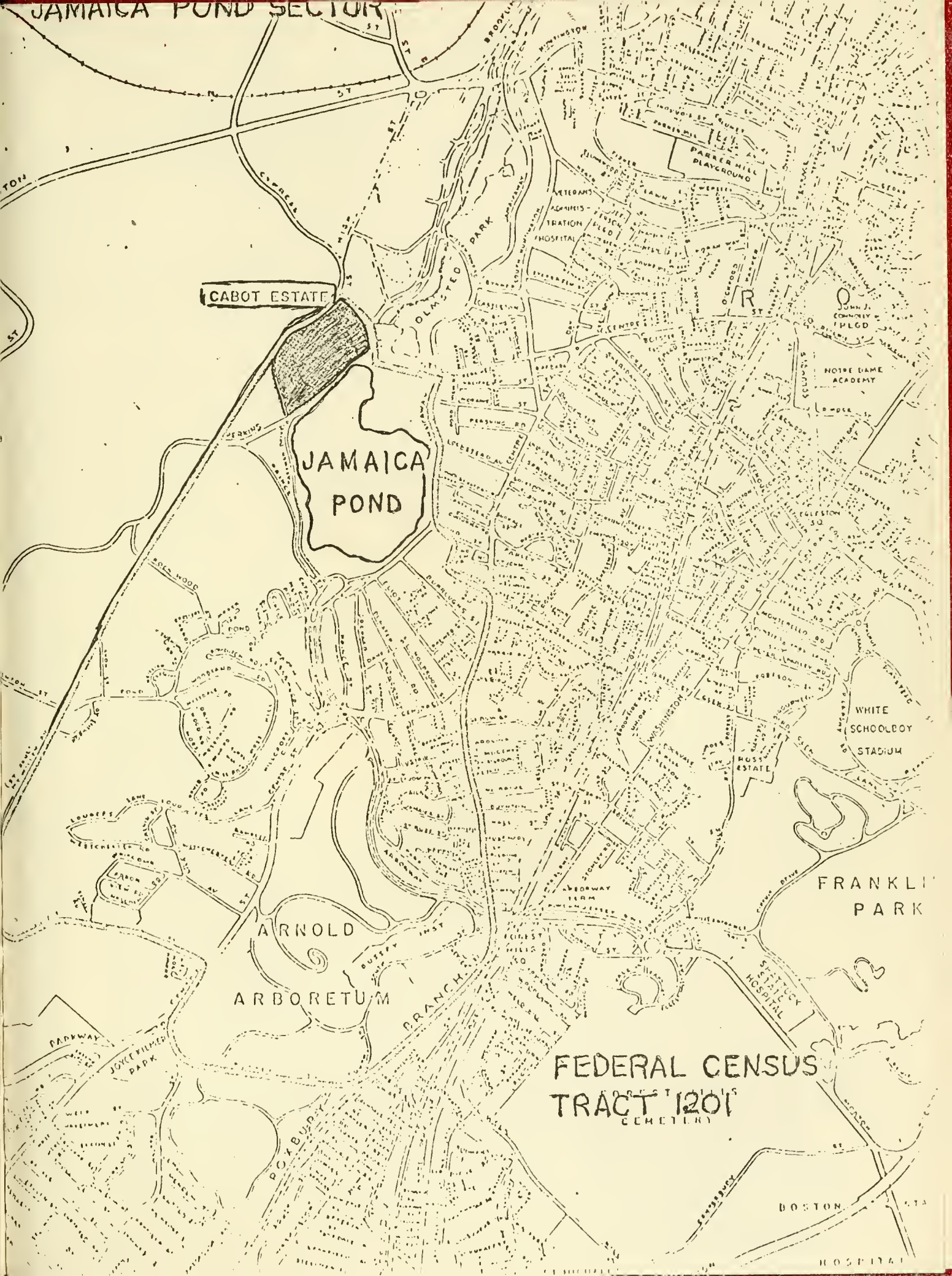
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CABOT ESTATE
JAMAICA POND
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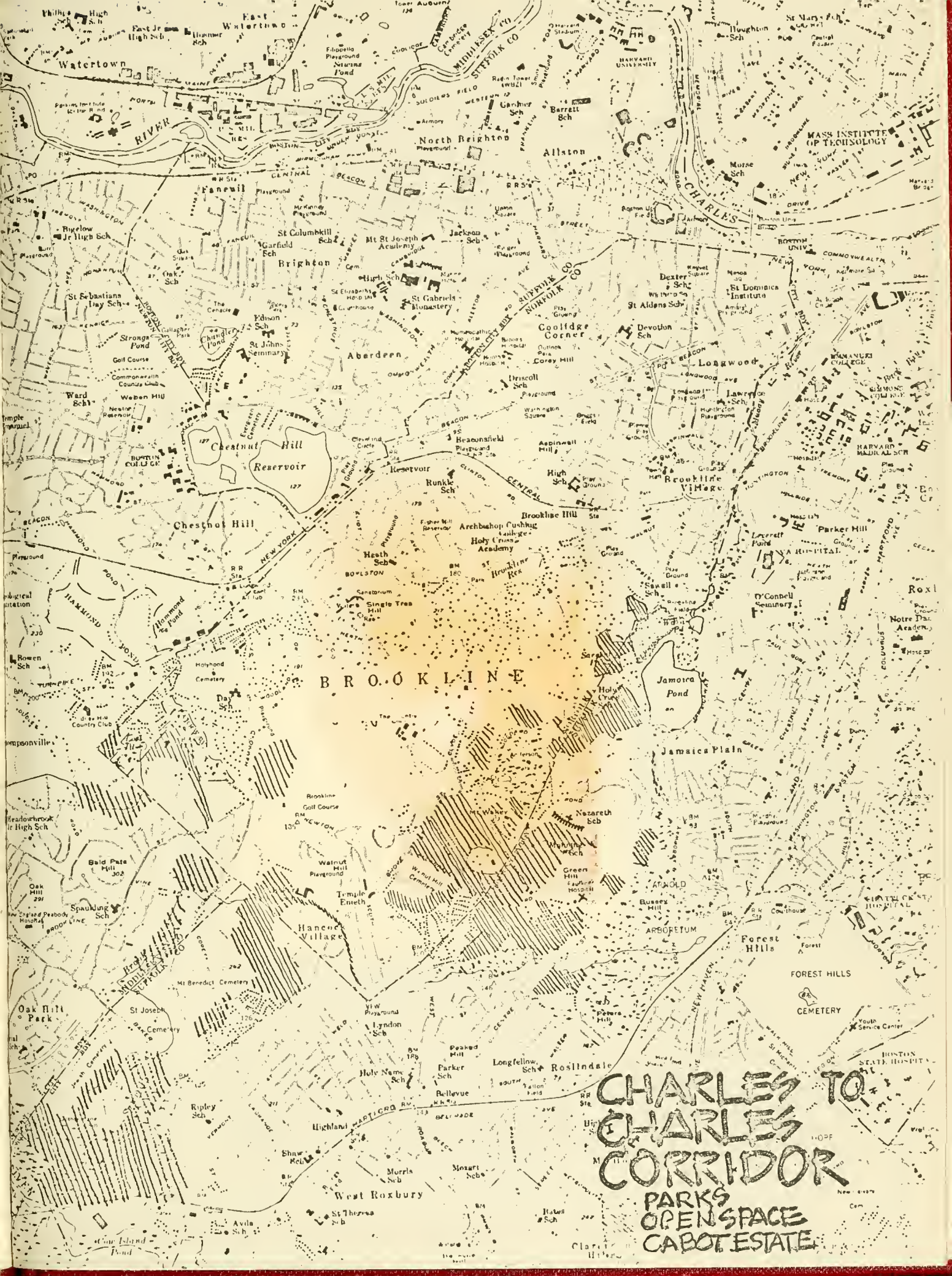
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Belmont
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Boston
Brighton
Allston
Brookline
Jamaica Plain
Roxbury
Chestnut Hill
Reservoir
Aberdeen
Coolidge Corner
Longwood
Brookline Village
Brookline Hill
Jamaica Pond
Hancock Village
Forest Hills
FOREST HILLS CEMETERY
Oak Hill Park
West Roxbury
Roslindale
Mt Hope
ARBORETUM
Arnold
Franklin Park
Stony Brook Reservation
Leverett Pond
Hammond Pond
Lost Island Pond
Walnut Hill Cemetery
Holyhood Cemetery
Mt Benedict Cemetery
St Joseph Cemetery
Evergreen Cemetery
Brookline Golf Course
Commonwealth Country Club
Longwood Cricket Club
Harvard University
Mass Institute of Technology
Boston University
Boston College
Emmanuel College
Simmons College
Harvard Medical School
Beth Israel Hospital
Children's Hospital
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Bald Pate Hill
Oak Hill
Green Hill
Temple Emeth
Temple Emanuel
Temple Ohabei Shalom
Temple Israel
Holy Cross Cathedral
Archbishop Cushing College
Holy Cross Academy
Mt St Joseph Academy
St Sebastians Day School
St Johns Seminary
St Gabriels Monastery
St Elizabeths Hospital
St Columbkill Sch
Garfield Sch
High Sch
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Rowen Sch
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Highland
Shaw Sch
Morris Sch
Mozart Sch
St Theresa Sch
Avila Sch
Bigelow Jr High Sch
Ward Sch
Webon Hill
Stronge Pond
Golf Course
Oak Sch
Johnson Sch
Gallagher Park
Chiang Pond
Fanueil Playground
McKinley Playground
North Brighton Playground
Beaconsfield Playground
Washington Square
Longwood Playground
Lawrence Playground
Aspinwall Hill
Corey Hill
Fisher Hill Reservoir
Walnut Hill Playground
Single Tree Hill
Sanatorium
Gardner Sch
Barrett Sch
Morse Sch
Houghton Sch
St Mary's Sch
Tower Auditorium
Harvard Stadium
Soldiers Field
Fiske Playground
Filippello Playground
Nurses Pond
Cambridge Cemetery
Middlesex Co
Suffolk Co
Norfolk Co
River
Charles
Beacon
Washington
Commonwealth
Boylston
Hammond
Newton
Centre
Walk Hill
Forest Hills
New Haven
New York
Central
Turnpike
Brookline
Golf Course
Country Club
Playground
Cemetery
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Pond
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Square
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Park
Hill
Avenue
Street
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Drive
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Cabot Estate Open Task Force

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